



Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Panhandle Health District, ID

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

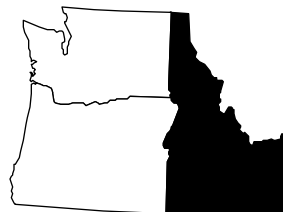
BACKGROUND

EPA Region 10 selected Silver Valley, Idaho for a Regional Brownfields Pilot. The Silver Valley was home to one of the largest mining operations in the country before the smelters closed in 1981. The Silver Valley area includes one of the largest Superfund sites in the nation. The towns of Kellogg, Pinehurst, Smelterville, and Wardner, which together have a population of 7,550, are within the boundary of the 21 square mile Bunker Hill Superfund site. Heavy metals contamination is widespread in soils, streams, and groundwater. Past emissions have severely harmed vegetation, and mill tailings have kept much of the slopes and valley floor defoliated. Contamination concerns and mine layoffs have negatively affected property values and the employment rate in the Valley, although both appear to have stabilized and have shown promising improvements. The \$210 million cleanup of the site is underway and progressing. This brownfields cooperative agreement will assist the entire Silver Valley in overcoming the environmental stigma associated with redevelopment of the area.

OBJECTIVES

The focus of the Panhandle Health District's

PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Panhandle Health District,
Idaho*

Date of Award:
September 1996

Amount: \$98,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets a 21-square mile site encompassing a former mine, where contamination from heavy metals is present in soil, streams, and groundwater.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

brownfields' effort is to plan for and assist in supporting new business in the Valley. Economic development planning has been stymied by industry misconceptions, ignorance of environmental law, and fear of liability. Even after Federal cleanup, economic rebirth will not occur until the stigma of environmental contamination is removed. The governments of the four towns affected by the Superfund site as well as other towns in the Valley will be cooperating with the county, regional health authority, and local, State, and Federal economic development agencies to address the Valley's problems and demonstrate the merits and viability of new business growth in the area.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot is:

- Preparing a business development guide that provides direction and support for the appropriate redevelopment of affected brownfields property in the Silver Valley;
- Producing a video educating viewers about brownfields issues and on the advantages of establishing a business in Silver Valley;
- Developing a Web Page about the Silver Valley Pilot for the Internet; and
- Conducting an economic summit conference to show how liability and contamination are no longer major barriers to redevelopment of the area. The conference will target private enterprise, lending institutions, regional and State government, economic development organizations, and business recruiters and brokers.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Panhandle Health District Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- The Washington Water Power Company spent \$60,000 to advertise and promote local, underutilized industrial sites. Washington Water Power plans to bring new jobs to redeveloped Silver Valley brownfields sites.